No 62 Ch. 4.

28 Samson -

A Treatise

On

Sick Head-ache

By

Ellis Malone

of North Carolina

November

1825

Sick Head ache

An attack of this disease for the most part does not come on suddenly; but is preceded by certain premonitory symptoms, and amongst those, not the least common are, coldness of the feet, with symptoms of Dyspepsia, as costiveness, sour eructations, flatulence &c. languor, sense of oppression about the pit of the stomach, dimness of sight, loss of memory and in a later stage of the complaint, we have sickness of stomach, with confusion and pain in the head, which is sometimes very severe. In some cases about this time. a slight degree of reaction takes place, which is indicated by activity of pulse, hot dry skin, with other symptoms of fever. The sickness of stomach sometimes terminates in vomiting. The matter thrown off, is sometimes bile, but more frequently the contents of

the stomach, nausea with more or less bilious. The vomiting almost always affords partial relief, and the patient for the most part falls to sleep. When he awakes he has a dull, distressing, and painfull sensation in the head, with confusion of ideas, and a sensation of fatigue and weariness. Restlessness, anxiety and irritableness, are attendant upon this disease. The patient ~~being~~ is fretfull and peevish. The eys are very sensible to light. The duration of this species of head ache differs in different persons, in some it subsides in two or three hours; in others lasting twenty four or longer, and with a violence scarcely to be endured, the smallest light or noise rendering the pain intolerable. In young persons the paroxysm goes off soon: but after the disease has been a complaint for years, it is of longer duration and the system becomes extremely

debilitated. Its returns are very irregular, occurring every two or three weeks in some, and in others there being longer intervals. Those who use but little exercise, and pay but little attention to their diet, are afflicted most severely with this disease.

Predisposing causes.

These are various. Every thing that enervates the system will predispose to the disease, and amongst these we may reckon the various species of intemperance as the most common. The effect of ardent spirits upon the constitution are too familiar to need comment. That they predispose to the disease under consideration, is universally admitted. And I may add that it is more frequently the case in dram-drinkers. If a man has been in the habit of using this baneful stimulus, for a considerable length of time, and then leaves it off, he will almost certainly be troubled more

or less with this disease. There are many people in this our day who are not termed drunkard (nor is it known that they drink more than a dram or two in a day) who are in the habit of drinking enough of the inebriating draught to render them ~~them~~ subject to this disease, and it is amongst them that this disease more extensively prevails But the species of intemperance which is most apt to induce this disease, with its train of evils is surfeiting. And I may here remark that nothing more frequently induces it than immoderate eating We cannot but remark that the stomach is not more frequently disordered than it is, when we consider the manner in which most people live, the delicacy of its surface, and that every thing taken in for our support and nourishment, must come in direct contact with, and be acted upon by that organ. Why one person can surfeit with impunity during a long life whilst, another apparently as robust as

he, would such understand cannot tell, but that it is the case, long experience and observation has incontestably proven. If we overload the stomach it either rejects it at once, or endeavours to perform the hard duty imposed upon it. It may ultimately succeed, though every such exertion tends infallibly to debilitate that organ and increase the disease in question. The inevitable consequence of such surfeiting, is that digestion is disturbed, the organ is unduly roused to exertion, and ultimately evinces a loss of tone by the occasional derangement of its functions and the production of the distressing sympathetic pain in the head. The effects of such eating, will often be seen the next day. Though it more frequently requires a succession of such surfeiting to produce the disease in question. In persons who live thus there is a hospitual irritation kept up in the alimentary canal from the ill digested food. This irritation will ere long produce functional derangement and ultimately

structural disorganisations. And from the strong sympathy existing between the stomach and head we may very satisfactorily account for the severe pain in the ~~head~~ latter part. Being purely sympathetic and always attendant upon the derangement of the alimentary canal.

As another species of intemperance we may mention the intemperate use of Tobacco. Though this article is extensively used, yet it is productive of much mischief, and is universally admitted to be a very frequent cause of this disease. How it produces this effect is perfectly intelligible to all. It is partly by its narcotic effect and partly by the excessive flow of saliva it occasions acting as a drain from the constitution, and consequently diverting the fluids from the stomach. Every one knows the use of the saliva in digestion It mixes with the food and renders it more easily digested. From these facts it is reasonable to infer that the long continued use of this article will

debilitate the stomach and its appendages.

Studious Habits.

This is a very frequent cause of the disease under consideration. We seldom see the studious and sedentary habits continued long at a time, without producing the sick headache in those who follow them. How this produces the disease every one knows who is acquainted with the influence of the mind over the body. It may be owing also in a measure to the want of exercise and compression of the viscera, consequent upon studious habits.

Mental agitation. The effect of fear, grief, anxiety and all strong mental emotions upon the digestive apparatus, is a subject of every days observation. And if these causes are slowly applied, is it not reasonable to infer that at length they will induce serious derangement of the above mentioned organs. From the well known sympathy between the stomach and brain, we may reasonably infer

that if immoderate mental emotions are carried on or the mind kept in a harrassed and anxious state, a portion of vital energy will be withdrawn from that organ. And as a consequence the stomach is disturbed in its functions. As an example of this we need only refer to those studious literati, whose digestive organs are always torpid in proportion to the exertion of their mental faculties. It is too often the case, that a variety of stimulating materials are applied to the debilitated organs, which will certainly produce morbid irritation and excitement. The more closely we examine the play of the passions in their effect upon the mental fabric, the more shall we be convinced of their power to produce derangement in the digestive organs. The keeping of late hours is another cause of this disease, and should be regarded as such by those persons who wish to escape this malady. Also lying late in the morning. As the sleep is unsound and does not refresh

but debilitate the System

Climate. This as a predisposing cause of sick head ache should not be overlooked. That this will debilitate the di-gestive apparatus is a fact universally admitted, and therefore needs no farther comment. I might enumerate many more predisposing causes of this disease, but the narrow limits of this essay will not permit I trust I have mentioned the most important and those most frequently producing this disease.

The exciting causes of this disease are numerous such as vicissitudes of weather, going to bed with cold feet, loss of sleep, eating late suppers. This last is very frequently productive of an attack of sick head ache, which is felt next morning upon rising. The want of any accustomed stimulus, as spirits, coffee, tea, tobacco, or the stimulus of food. Many other things might excite this disease into action. Many of the predisposing causes act as exciting causes also. I shall therefore content

myself with having mentioned the most frequent.
Pathology. As regards the pathology of this disease it can be stated in a very few words. Every thing connected with the disease goes to show that it undoubtedly has its seat and throne in the stomach. We have always before us attack the symptoms of indigestion, as costiveness, sour eructations, flatulence And if the cause of these be removed the disease itself will disappear. The severe pain in the head is symptomatic and ceases when its cause is removed This disease does not exist long before it produces derangement in the functions of the Liver, From the strong sympathy existing between those two organs Treatment. The means of cure must be perseveringly applied, as the disease gives way slowly. It is too often the case that persons labouring under this disease, takes up the erroneous idea that it is incurable and will not submit to a proper course for their recovery. But if proper attention be given

to diet, exercise and the occasional use of Medicines they will seldom be disappointed. It requires a longer time in some than in others owing to the violence of the disease, the duration before medical aid is applied for, and the attention paid to the advice and direction of the Physician. From what has been said it is reasonable to conclude that an emetic should be the first thing given, as of all others it has the most direct and powerfull action upon the stomach, removing as it always does the foul contents, raising it to invigorated action and emptying the engorged biliary ducts. It should be given as soon as we perceive the attack. and its operation promoted by copious draughts of some warm liquid as Camomile tea. If there is high action of the arterial system, blood should be drawn. After the emetic has operated we should give a dose of laudanum sufficiently large to ensure sound sleep. When the patient awakes he

should have a dose of Calomel, to which a few grains of Ipicac may be added with advantage. In some cases the Antimonium might be of service. This is the course to be pursued in the paroxysm of this disease. We come now to the more important part, that of establishing a radical Cure. It is necessary to pay the strictest attention to the bowels, keeping them always open with some gentle laxative, as Rhubarb, ~~Mag~~ magnesia &c. In southern climates there is sometimes a accumulation of bile or a torpor of the stomach which occasions sickness of the stomach with a dull, heavy sensation in the head. In such cases the Super. Carb. Soda or Pot, or the preparation of hickory ashes has a very good effect, stimulating the stomach to increase action. But the relief obtained by these measures are only temporary. The most speedy and permanent relief is obtained by a gentle course of Ipicac. It raises the stomach to invigorated action, and enables

it to perform its functions much better. This should in all cases be succeeded by a gentle cathartic. This point being settled we commence with medicines which restore permanent tone to the stomach and bowels. And amongst these carb. of Iron is not the least conspicuous in this disease. It should be given in small doses in combination with various other tonic medicines as Columbo, Gentian, orange peel Rhubarb &c. The occasional presence of acid in the stomach should be corrected by mag. sulph. carb. Pot & soda. Fowlers mineral solution in doses of 10 or 12 drops has been given in this disease with advantage. We come now to the dietetic part of the treatment upon which we should place the greatest reliance in the cure of this very distressing disease. When we take in to consideration the delicacy of a debilitated stomach, we must be confident that any thing that disagrees with it must produce a very pernicious effect

upon that organ. In this case acting as an irritanous substance, increasing the irritation and consequently the debility of the digestive organs. The patient himself can best tell what will agree or disagree with him and should act accordingly eating nothing but those articles which agree with his stomach. So long as the patient indulges in the pleasures of the table, so long may he expect to be troubled with this disease. He must therefore lay them aside and avoid too and ~~[illegible]~~ parties as there is a more than ordinary degree of temptation at these places. He should confine himself to a simple plain diet, and that of those articles most easily digested. The bread of such patients should be light and old, as it is found to be more easily digested than when otherwise prepared. If he uses wheat bread it should always be old. Corn bread is very difficult of digestion to a weak stomach, particularly

When warm, as it is generally ate to the south. Should acidity prevail light bread should be laid aside and crakers substituted. As regards meats the wild is better than the domestic being more easily digested, and should be used by the invalid when practicable. Venison is one of easiest articles of digestion in the whole animal kingdom and would therefore be innocent in the case under consideration. Beef is admissible and may be used with impunity, if in moderation. Corn beef is also admissible. Mutton may be the patients standard dish, as it has been found to agree well with weak stomachs. Oysters are admissible, and some think they even promote digestion. One thing is certain, we know them to be easily digested. They should always be eaten with biscuit or crakers. It is of great importance to persons labouring under this disease to have all their meals well cooked and tender as they are much more easily digested

by a weak stomach. In this as in every other disease, simplicity of diet is of infinite importance, and should be rigidly enforced. Weak stomachs cannot digest a combination of articles, without disturbing its tranquility, which is of importance to preserve. The patient should confine himself to those articles which he can live longest upon without living. Slow eating in this as in every other disease is certainly of great consequence to the invalid. By this means the saliva and gastric liquor mixes more equally with the food, thus promoting digestion. The food is also better masticated and the stomach more gradually distended. Consequently it is not so liable to become overloaded. The invalid should never suffer himself to become very hungry. The stomach being like a school bag if not employed always doing mischief. It is certainly of great importance to the invalid not to overload the stomach as ~~this~~ it has been

shown that this alone is a frequent cause of the disease under consideration. The patient therefore should eat a few and small quantities at a time. He should always cease eating before he feels a sense of distention. Sauces of all kinds are injurious and offensive to a weak stomach and should therefore be avoided. Tea and coffee are not proper for persons with a weak stomach. They are by many thought to act as a predisposing cause of this disease. In place of them milk should be used. Though it may not agree well at first yet it will soon come to agree very well. The way in which milk is most usefull is with lime water in equal quantities. The patient should drink of this often in the day. To this alone some have ascribed this cure. That it would be desirable none can doubt. Butter is injurious to most weak stomachs and should be avoided. Though some think fresh butter may be used with impunity

As regards drink, cold water is certainly preferable ~~to all others~~ The patient should drink as little as possible at table as it dilutes the gastric liquor and consequently impairs digestion.

Exercise.

This is not only serviceable in this, but in many other chronic diseases. The mode which has been found most salutary is riding on horse-back, and when practicable should be used. Its good effects are probably owing to the agitation it produces ~~of~~ the internal organs, which produces. Long journeys are preferable to riding about home, on account of the continual change of air upon the system. If possible some object or business should be had in view, as it renders the exercise much more salutary. The use of the flesh brush would also be of some service. It would increase the good effect of exercise.

The passions should be carefully kept under. as it has been shown that they produce the disease in question. If they are suffered to play we need not expect a cure of this disease. The patient should be regular in his habits and temperate in his conduct. He should retire early as it has been seen that late hours predispose to this disease. He should also rise early, never indulging in the unsound sleep of the morning. It only debilitates the system instead of refreshing it. If convenient he should warm well his feet when going to bed, as lying down with cold feet sometimes brings on an attack of sick head ache. The patient would do well to wear a flannel night cap. On rising every morning he should wash well the surface of his body with a

a towel wet with cold water. The tonic effect of cold bathing upon the constitution is too familiar with every one to need any comment. This point then should never be neglected where it can be done with propriety.